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INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Interview With: Raymond Rocca
Interviewers: Dan Dwyer and Ed Greissing
DATE: 3/15/76
Place: Arlington, VA

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24 Mar 94
(1)(A)

Ed Greissing and Dan Dwyer of the SSC staff interviewed Raymond Rocca, retired Chief, Counterintelligence/Research and Analysis, CIA, at his home in Arlington, Virginia on March 15, 1976. The purpose of the interview was to clarify the role of the CIA in the investigation of President Kennedy's assassination.

(1) The GPFLOR Phase. The GPFLOR phase of the CIA's investigation of the assassination covered the period of November 23, 1963 until January 23, 1964. Rocca explained that Richard Helms, DDP, delegated ²⁶ Jack Whitten, desk chief of the Western Hemisphere division, to direct and control the CIA's responses to information that was being reported from CIA stations around the globe. Most of the information the CIA received came from Mexico City where Oswald had contacted the Soviet and Cuban diplomatic establishments in late September and early October. Rocca noted that Thomas Karamessines, Assistant DDP, was probably involved in Helms' decision to have ²⁶ Jack Whitten direct the GPFLOR investigation.

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(2) Warren Commission Phase. Rocca places the beginning of the Warren Commission phase around January 23, 1964, when J. Lee Rankin contacted Helms and asked for CIA assistance for the Commission. Helms delegated Rocca to be the "point of contact" of the CIA with the Warren Commission. Rocca's own Counterintelligence staff involved in research matters for the Commission included Tom Dooley, Paul Hartman and Thomas Hall. Other CIA personnel involved with the Commission were ²⁶ ~~(Jack Whitten)~~ Murphy (Chief of SB), J.C. King, Wigren (Chief SB Research), and Bagley (Deputy Chief SB). Rocca noted that as liaison became more informal, staff members of the Commission had direct contact with ²⁶ ~~(Whitten)~~, Murphy, Wirgren and Bagley. Helms maintained direct contact with Rankin.

Rocca emphasized that the Warren Commission phase was not interpreted by CIA as an investigation. Rocca said that when the Warren Commission "task force" was established, all cables and materials generated in the GPFL00R period from ²⁶ ~~(Whitten's)~~ desk were made available to the task force. Rocca added, however, that the task force made no appraisal of the GPFL00R phase. When questioned if the Warren Commission "task force" reviewed Mexico City traffic to check name traces, for example, Rocca replied the material was left alone except for the allegations such as the Alvarado matter which concerned the Commission. ²⁶ ~~(Whitten)~~

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Cuba. Rocca also suggested that J.C. King might have known of some sensitive operations in general but that he would have been left out on specifics. Rocca added that ²⁶Whitten "might have known about sensitive operations through osmosis" because ²⁶Whitten as desk Chief, Western Hemisphere, would send out traffic to stations including traffic dealing with operations. Rocca noted that the DDP or Director could have by-passed ²⁶Whitten by authoring and cabling a message themselves.

With regard to Western Hemisphere cable traffic and assassination plots, Rocca noted that in April 1975 there was an individual (name unknown) from Western Hemisphere appointed by Dave Phillips to work with the Inspector General. This individual found the memo that discussed Desmond Fitzgerald's having used Robert Kennedy's name in meeting with AMLASH, in the WH files.

(5) Miscellaneous. Rocca saw nothing strange in the FBI report on Oswald's FPCC activities being routed to SAS. He stated that SAS would have received all reports of relevance to Cuba.

Rocca could offer no explanation as to why the WAVE cable discussing anti-Castro groups' public statement on the assassination was filed in the "sensitive Ops-Kennedy file" and later placed in the Oswald 201 file.

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